

Kostopoulou, Loukia & Parthena Charamlampidou (eds.) (2024). *New Perspectives in Media Translation: Transcreation in the Digital Age*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 349, £36.99. ISBN: 9783031628313 (paperback).

The digital revolution has irrevocably changed the media landscapes, requiring innovative approaches to translation that transcend traditional definitions of translation and conceptual boundaries. *New Perspectives in Media Translation: Transcreation in the Digital Age*, edited by Loukia Kostopoulou and Parthena Charalampidou, offers a timely exploration of “transcreation” in practices involving media translation-adaptation, re-contextualisation, and recreative content production. Comprising 12 chapters across three thematic parts (in addition to the introductory chapter), the volume aims to “explore the practice of transcreation in a variety of contexts from audiovisual to digital media and bring together insights both from industry and from academia” (p. 2) by presenting theoretical perspectives on transcreation, as well as insights into both the practice of transcreation and the training of transcreators. This review critically examines the volume’s theoretical contributions, methodological innovations, and empirical insights while addressing its limitations in dealing with emerging AI technologies.

In the introductory chapter, the editors provide an overview of transcreation as a contested concept and practice, and present the volume’s organisational framework. This dual approach serves to unpack transcreation’s nature by contrasting academic and industry perspectives. Part I (Chapters 2-4) consists of three chapters that provide a solid theoretical foundation, outlining “diverse theoretical approaches to transcreation” and charting “the evolution of the term within Translation Studies over the years” (p. 2). In Chapter 2, Klaus Kaindl examines the contrasting views of transcreation in academia and the translation industry from a sociological perspective. He emphasises that cooperation between academia and the translation industry is essential for the professionalisation of the translation industry and for meeting the challenges of technological advances and social change, as it can bridge the gaps between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

In Chapter 3, José Fernando Carrero Martín and Juan José Martínez Sierra trace back and analyse the origin and development of the concept of transcreation. They explore its diverse roots in various geographical contexts such as India or Brazil, and in specialised industry sectors, and present several definitions from academics and professionals to illustrate its close links with areas including marketing, advertising and video game localisation. They argue that transcreation is not a separate entity or area in its own but rather a label for a type of creative translation involving cultural adaptation within the field of translation studies, as, in their opinion, its novelty lies in increasing terminological diversity rather than in introducing new theoretical concepts.

In Chapter 4, Alessandra Rizzo offers “a theoretical investigation of the concept of

transcreation with valuable examples taken from audiovisual media” (p. 5). Through in-depth case studies of television commercials, she examines how transcreators manipulate language and cultural elements to resonate with the target audience, thereby achieving the intended translation purpose and ensuring appropriate levels of cultural adaptation. The chapter shows that transcreation is a culture-centred approach that plays a crucial role in bridging cultural gaps in the audiovisual industry.

Part II (Chapters 5-7) looks at the practical applications of transcreation in different media. In Chapter 5, Luis Damián Moreno García adopts a qualitative research approach to conduct a contrastive analysis of the representation of cultural realities from different cultures in the mobile game *Arena of Valor* (AoV). Moreover, he also interprets the potential impact of these strategies on players based on the theory of cultural representation (Hall, 1997). This systematic investigation provides valuable insights into the complex processes of cultural adaptation required in video game localisation.

Pietro Luigi Iaia, in Chapter 6, examines the strategies used to transform image-macro memes into reels from two main theoretical perspectives: the concept of ‘transmediality’ and theories relevant to humorous discourse. Through a workshop-based study, Iaia analyses the multi-modal elements such as images, text, and sound in both the original memes and the resulting reels. The chapter thus offers valuable insights into the various transmedial strategies that can be used to create engaging and humorous content in the digital age.

In Chapter 7, Claudia Benetello explores the intricacies of the transcreation profession in advertising. Benetello emphasises that cultural sensitivity allows the transcreated content to resonate with the target audience, that copy-writing skills are essential for creating engaging messages, and that collaboration with the client ensures that the final output meets their expectations. The author also asserts that human transcreators, endowed as they are with creative thinking and personal preferences, cannot be replaced. This comprehensive chapter provides in-depth insights into the transcreation workflow in the advertising industry, within which transcreation is defined as a blend of translation and copy-writing.

While Parts I and II deal primarily with the theoretical exploration of transcreation and with its most common practices, Part III (Chapters 8-12) looks into the training of transcreators, including the skills required of them, and the impact of new technologies. In Chapter 8, Heidi Verplaetse focuses on the role of transcreation in journalistic translation. She begins by defining key concepts such as ‘journalistic transcreation’ and reconsiders the skills of transcreators from a psychological perspective, highlighting a research gap in the creative adaptation of figurative and novel language in news. Through a case study of student translations from English to Dutch, she examines challenges involved in handling culturally specific metaphors, neologisms, and rhetorically crafted headlines. Her analysis reveals common issues,

such as overly literal translations that diminish rhetorical impact and cultural relevance. The chapter concludes by proposing targeted strategies for the training of transcreators, such as explicit instruction in adapting figurative language and in reshaping headlines to maximise their impact. It also calls for further empirical research to improve teaching in this area.

In Chapter 9, from a psychological perspective, Cinzia Spinzi examines the competencies of trainee transcreators, advocating an emotion-centred pedagogy that aligns with the editors' emphasis on skills beyond linguistic proficiency (Kostopoulou & Charalampidou, 2024). She conducts an experimental study involving students from an MA translator training programme who were presented with tasks and challenges in a tourism context. The research is designed to assess the trainees' proactive empathy, specifically their capacity to anticipate the cultural and emotional expectations of a given target audience, and to evaluate how this skill influences the design of their transcreational outputs. The results demonstrate a strong positive correlation between trainees' proactive empathy and the expert-rated quality of their transcreational outputs across three key dimensions: cultural alignment, potential emotional appeal, and communicative goal fit. This chapter contributes to the understanding of how emotional skills can enhance transcreation in the tourism industry and offers a model for translation educators to integrate the development of such skills into training.

In Chapter 10, Carla Botella Tejera and Oliver Carreira focus on the pedagogical design of transcreation competences. They start by reviewing influential resources in translator training, particularly the competence model developed by the PACTE group and the competence framework proposed by the EMT (European Master's in Translation) network. They also summarise teaching proposals that have previously been published and which attempt to integrate creative practices into translation curricula. Based on this, the authors present their own original framework for a curriculum. Their three-part model is designed to develop transcreation competence progressively. It moves from foundational theory and cultural skills to hands-on practical application in real-world scenarios and, finally, to integrated assessment and creative reflection. The contribution aims at providing a well-structured curricular framework that can be incorporated into undergraduate or postgraduate programs and guide the development of competences in training contexts.

In Chapter 11, Marián Morón Martín emphasises the importance of cultivating and assessing creativity in the training of transcreators. She highlights the vital role of creativity in both translation and transcreation, as well as its importance in enhancing the employability of translators. The chapter also argues for interdisciplinarity in translator training, believing that it can effectively foster creativity and contribute to the development of appropriate competences for trainees to work in the field of transcreation. This chapter makes a valuable contribution to the field of translation and transcreation by providing practical training resources based on successful

projects developed in training contexts.

In Chapter 12, Miguel A. Jiménez-Crespo delves into transcreation in the AI era. Using a combination of literature review and comparative analysis, he synthesises the different views on transcreation from academia and the industry. Comparing human translation and AI-based translation, he finds that human translators still have unparalleled strengths, despite remarkable advances in generative large-scale language models and AI applications. The chapter stresses that human translators are better picking up on cultural elements and emotional nuances in the source text, making their translations more resonant with the target audience and more appropriate to the expectations of the target context. This research is significant because it enriches the theoretical understanding of transcreation and proposes a clear collaborative path for the translation industry. It advocates that AI can be useful to manage foundational language tasks, thus helping human transcreators to focus on optimising cultural and emotional resonance. This approach integrates the strengths of both AI and human transcreators into a cohesive workflow.

The major features of this volume lie in the following three aspects. First, it integrates theoretical perspectives with practical analysis in the study of transcreation. For example, one of the chapters uses the localisation of a specific video game as a case study to advance the theoretical knowledge of how transcreation adapts cultural elements. It has often been argued that the link between theory and practice is crucial to a thorough understanding of translation (see, for example, Newmark, 1988). This volume not only helps readers to understand the complex concept of transcreation, but also provides practical guidance that they can apply to their own translation work. Second, it adopts a multidisciplinary approach incorporating insights from sociology, linguistics, psychology, and cultural studies, which provide a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding how transcreation operates. This multifaceted approach enriches our comprehension of transcreation as a complex and dynamic process that transcends the traditional boundaries of translation theory and practice. Third, the volume combines chapters employing qualitative and quantitative research methods and contributions based on case studies, surveys, and ethnographic research to provide a robust analysis of transcreation in various media contexts. For example, Chapter 5, on the localisation, transcreation, and adaptation of cultural realia in video games, presents a detailed analysis of the entire transcreation workflow in the video game industry. All in all, this volume offers a powerful combination of theoretical depth and practical applicability, multidisciplinary insights and methodological innovation.

Despite its merits, the volume could be strengthened in two aspects. The first relates to consistency of content. In the contributions of several authors, the volume presents inconsistent definitions of transcreation, a phenomenon also identified by Díaz-Millón and Olvera-Lobo (2023) in their systematic review of literature on this practice. This makes it difficult for the readers to form a clear understanding of transcreation and it may impede the smooth academic exchange of ideas on this activity, as well as

hindering the development of a comprehensive theoretical framework for transcreation. Second, the volume's case-study selection has limitations. The need to cover different text types and cultural situations in translation research has been emphasised (Toury 1995). However, many of the analysed cases are linked to particular cultures in Western countries, to China and Japan, as well as to the video game, advertising and journalism industries. This limited scope means that underrepresented regions and other relevant areas of transcreation practice are inadequately covered. For example, the *Arena of Valor* case study focuses on the cross-cultural adaptation of East Asian cultural elements, but it restricts its analysis to their adaptation for Western markets and to the genre of competitive mobile games. This overlooks other game types and the distinct challenges of adapting cultural content from non-Asian contexts for global audiences. These limitations suggest aspects of transcreation that warrant refinement in future work.

This volume is a remarkable contribution to the realm of translation studies. It not only enriches the theoretical discourse in the discipline but also provides practical guidance for professionals working in fields in which transcreation emerges as a useful and relevant practice. By bringing together different perspectives and case studies, it offers a comprehensive view of transcreation and highlights its importance in the digital age.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the National Social Science Fund of China [Grant Number 22BYY022].

References

- Díaz-Millón, M. & Olvera-Lobo, M. D. (2023). Towards a definition of transcreation: A systematic literature review. *Perspectives*, 31(2), 347-364.
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Sage Publications.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. Prentice Hall.
- Toury, G. (1995). *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. John Benjamins.

Xiaohui Liang

Wuhan University of Technology

Email: xiaohui.liang64@whut.edu.cn

Wei Chen

Wuhan University of Technology

Email: wei.chen@whut.edu.cn